

**FINAL Minutes**  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Committee  
Wednesday, September 28, 2016  
6:30 p.m.  
City Hall – Lower Level Conference Room

**Attendees**

<u>Members</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Monroe Dennis, Council member	<u>X</u>	
Lilla Sutton, Co-chair	<u>X</u>	
Sharon Fletcher, Staff Liaison	<u>X</u>	
Anita Wolley		<u>X</u>
Dottie Chiquelo		<u>X</u>
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Carleveva Thompson, Contract Secretary	<u>X</u>	

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:45pm.

**II. Approval of Agenda**

Ms. Sutton asked for the group to review the agenda and make revisions if needed.  
Ms. Sutton would like to add under Other Business, the scheduling of the videographer and confirm the date of the event.

**III. Scheduling Future Meeting Dates**

October 26, 2016  
November 16, 2016  
December 14, 2016  
January 4, 2017

Ms. Sutton asked the group to review the future meeting dates to see if these dates will work for everyone. There is a room conflict for the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. The January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting date may change depending on when the event is scheduled.

**IV. Review Past Meeting Notes**

- a. Notes from June 16, 2016 meeting  
Potential Speakers/references
  - Quint Gregory, UMD
  - Williams (?) American Studies person check with Mary Seis
  - Sheri Parks – American Studies Dept?
  - Ed Gaines, Jr.

- The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) Minority member on the Homeland Security Committee

Themes:

- Dreams Deferred
- Service
- Voting

Assignments before next Committee meeting:

- Mr. Dennis to contact Clarice for theatre availability on Saturday, January 14, 2017
- Ms. Fletcher to complete thank you letters and mail with enclosures
- Mr. Dennis to seek out potential UMD speakers
- Ms. Fletcher to draft letter to Honorable Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) Minority member on the Homeland Security Committee and/or Lilla contact to contact his office for availability.
- Ms. Fletcher to find entertainer's name that Bob provided.
- Sue is seeking local replacement for herself.
- Sue is checking for Baha'i youth groups to participate in the program.
- Ms. Wolley will begin contacting CP schools through principals and art instructors for contributions; ask for essays?
- Ms. Fletcher to complete email to Tracee for 2017 MC
- Tricia Homer as alternate MC

Ms. Sutton asked if feedback was received from last year's event. Ms. Fletcher retrieved the meeting notes from the March 31, 2016 meeting and the following items were discussed as to what did or did not work:

- Drummers – entry needs to be more engaging
- Youth Speakers – Many guests and Committee members reported that Aqeel Qadir was conducting sales in the lobby; in addition his time on stage was not well-received as he did not speak to the theme of the event. Many positive comments were made concerning the piece presented by Avonte Cottoy. Mrs. Wolley gave Ms. Fletcher gift cards to be sent to these two program participants.
- No presentation for review, no participation;
- Alexander Butler – not as smooth as first year, but keep coming
- Student Artwork – MNCPPC aftercare did participate, all City schools contributed except Holy Redeemer, Al-Huda and College Park Academy.
- Monroe Dennis suggested that the Planning Committee connect with the City's Education Advisory Committee to encourage participation by City schools and for possible sponsorships of items of recognition for student entries.
- Exhibits – for 2016 were schools only. What options should be considered for 2017?
- Speakers were not timed well– must be shortened; Recommendations for 2017 Ben Thomas, Mississippi or contact past speaker Dr. Thornton-Dill for recommendations with emphasis on persons who may have personal experiences with Dr. King.
- Performers – in general we should shorten performances and reduce the number of performers for a less packed program.
- Tracee Wilkins – did a good job given limited preparation provided. Her efforts to to engage audience and participants was appreciated; It was suggested that she be asked

to join us for 2017. Whoever the MC for 2017 is, should be encouraged/required to attend at least one planning meeting.

- Award Presentation – many were impressed by the history provided and its addition to the program. Recipient was most pleased. This has set a new standard and repeats may be expected.
- Proclamation – no negative comments were received.
- Refreshments – Concerns from Mayor about the cost. Committee members and guests appreciated this new addition to the event. It was suggested that the program be shortened to 1.5 hours to allow for more mingling and to include an announcement of reception to allow program participants and guests to make adequate transportation and parking arrangement. Senior bus, parking is no longer free.
- House count from Clarice staff was 298

## V. Confirm 2017 Event Theme and Keynote Speaker

[The Honorable Alexander Williams, Jr. – UM Center for Education, Justice and Ethics](#)

Retired Federal Judge, Alexander Williams committed to Ms. Lomax to be a speaker. Mr. Dennis has also contacted him and he would be glad to be a speaker and will tailor his speech to the event theme.

### Theme Ideas

- Dreams Deferred
- Service
- Voting

Ms. Sutton likes the Dreams Deferred theme and discussed that the theme needs to catch people's attention. The items below are possible themes for the committee to review:

<https://blackmillennials.com/2015/01/19/reclaimmlk-a-radical-dream-unrealized/>

# #ReclaimMLK: A Radical Dream Unrealized

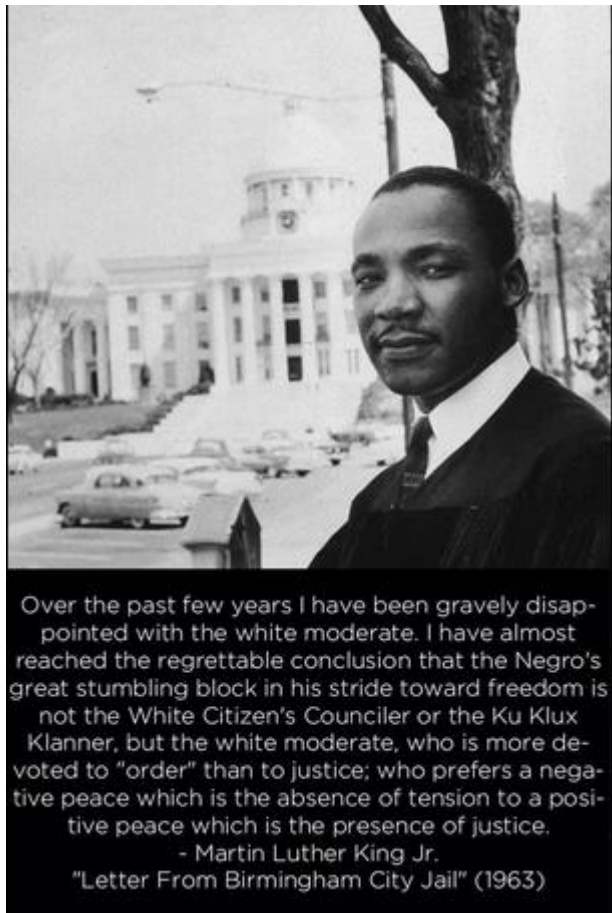
[January 19, 2015](#) by [blackmillennials](#) in [Culture and Society](#), [Justice](#).

On April 4th, 1968, the world mourned. Assassinated on that day, Martin Luther King, Jr. was no longer a living revolutionary, but a fallen hero transcribed through the annals of whitewashed history. To date, he sprinkles the pages of dilapidated public school textbooks, while his image is conspicuously placed on crumbling classroom walls during Black History Month. History does not detail the radical ideological spirit that encompasses the man who activated an international community towards social justice; he is a diluted and sedated caricature befitting the principles of white paternalism.

In order to correct this grave misrepresentation, [#ReclaimMLK](#) is an initiative that highlights the radical underpinning which defines Dr. King's socio-political ideology. In an effort to humanize the legend and appropriately showcase his labor without whitewashed window dressing, [#ReclaimMLK](#) exposes the overlooked radical elements of Dr. King.

Working towards a community adjoined through [racial and economic equity](#), Dr. King's legacy has not been realized in a country that painstakingly embraces the ruthlessness of capitalism. Ironically, the loudest supporters of unchecked capitalism egregiously use Dr. King and his legacy as a duplicitous tactic meant to alleviate growing discontent and disillusionment with the capitalist system. They do so without a comprehensive knowledge of Dr. King's work. Talking from both sides of their mouths, they

“honor” Dr. King as a good ole Negro moderate, while chastising contemporary Black activists and organizers for our apparent lack of white consideration.



Despite their persistent attempts to make it so, Dr. King was not merely a passive Black leader; he was a radical revolutionary whose vision of a racially and economically equitable society has yet to be realized. Dr. King’s next frontier was confronting economic inequity manifested through institutional racism. The intersection between race and class is exactly where we find ourselves today through the predatory prison industrial complex and broken windows policing.

Towards the end of the Civil Rights Movement, the longstanding racial hierarchy needed to be maintained. Gone were the days of Jim Crow; overt racism was socially repugnant. The system needed to be revamped in a manner that detached itself from the form of racism that one could easily pinpoint. [President Nixon](#) said it best:

“The whole problem is the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to.”

His final solution was the [War on Drugs](#), a national law enforcement program that encouraged hyper-aggressive policing in predominately Black, low-income neighborhoods. The War on Drugs accelerated under the watchful eye of President Reagan. Ever since, low-income communities of color have been [disproportionately](#) targeted and victimized by draconian and ineffective policies. The conglomerate criminal justice system has been complicit in these harsh maneuvers, while the [corporate sector](#) silently slithers in, routinely amassing obscene wealth from the inorganic demand for prisoner labor. The prison industrial complex is a faceless and barbaric system operating on racist undercurrents with the ultimate intention of stockpiling wealth.

Theme was not decided and is to be discussed at the October meeting.

## **VI. Identify Master of Ceremonies for 2017 Event**

Ms. Fletcher shared that Tracee Wilkins, the 2016 MC, is not available to be a MC.

Mr. Dennis will reach out to Tricia Homer as an alternate MC. Ms. Sutton proposed to

the committee to have Andrea Roane, Channel 9 anchor as an alternate MC and she will reach out to her.

## **VII. Outline Event Promotion Strategies**

Mr. Dennis reported that the city has hired a communication coordinator who has added Facebook and Twitter on the city's website. Mr. Dennis suggested the MLK committee Facebook page could be folded into the city's social media accounts instead. The communication coordinator also has connections with local news channels and this can help get the word out for the event.

Ms. Sutton asked what content can be posted on the city's Facebook page. Mr. Dennis will contact the communication coordinator and invite her to a meeting of the Tribute Committee.

Mr. Dennis stated that Solan Mitchell in the UM Office of Communications is also very savvy with social media and will ask if he can help with promoting the campus community event online.

There was also a discussion on the use of posters. It was suggested that we have posters available for use in local businesses to promote the event.

Mr. Dennis also suggested adding the date of the event in The Municipal Scene once a date is established.

## **VIII. Other Business**

### **b. Event Day and Venue**

The date of the event was tentatively scheduled for January 14th. The Clarice Smith may be available for Sunday January 15th from 2-4pm, but need to confirm. There was discussion to possibly move to Black History Month, in February. Ms. Fletcher proposed conducting the event in April and have the venue at the Archives.

**Action:** Mr. Dennis will check to see if January dates will work at the Clarice Smith.

Ms. Sutton discussed that moving the event to April would be good because weather wouldn't be an issue. Ms. Fletcher discussed that February would be an issue because of school traffic due to games. Ms. Sutton asked to table the discussion until the next meeting.

### **c. Videographer**

Ms. Sutton asked the committee if Jimmy will be used again for the 2017 event. This will be tabled for next meeting.

Ms. Sutton moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dennis seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.